

## **House-Hunting on Okinawa?**

by Rudy Wartella

Welcome to Okinawa! Are you looking for a place to live? There are many great places to live on Okinawa. The purpose of this article is to inform you of what to look for when looking for a place on Okinawa. Not all that glitters is gold – be careful!

The first thing you should do is follow all the instructions and rules given to you by Department of Defense Okinawa Family Housing located on Kadena Air Base. Plan on where you want to live. Do you want to be close to work, or close to one of the military bases? Do you want to live in a big city or a nice quiet area? On Okinawa, you can find a nice place with an ocean view. You can also live in the middle of the business district. It is important that you access your priorities. You also should be aware of rush hour traffic and the effect that may have on your commute.

Next, you should find a reputable housing agent. On Okinawa, most housing is managed by one of the local housing agencies. As you might expect, not all housing agencies are the same. You should ask around for good housing agencies. Some are much better than others.

Not all things are as they seem. Make sure that you ask about parking. Limited parking is a common problem. In my housing area, there were no designated visitor's spots (there is now). This can be problematic.

Make sure you understand the pet policy. I do not own a pet and do not want to live near barking dogs; yet, I have had to endure the unleashed dog and the early morning/late night barking.

Some other things to beware of: Burning trash, sugar cane, or leaves can force you to close your windows. Late night traffic noise is also a consideration. Motorcyclist and sports car owners love to rev their engines late at night and it is not uncommon for them to race down the road.

Also be mindful of any lease you may sign. The English wording is frequently poor and the terms are sometimes ambiguous. If you have any questions about your lease, you can contact the off-base referral office at 634-1430 or you can have it reviewed by your legal assistance office.

Hopefully this article gave you some insight about what to look for when shopping for a place to live on Okinawa. Take your time, ask a lot of questions, and find the place that is right for you. July, 2009.